

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, APR 2015

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		1169	
GEF Agency project ID		227	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-3	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Area Management	
Country/Countries		Syria	
Region		Asia	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		BD OP-1; BD SP-1	
Executing agencies involved		Ministry of State for Environment Affairs (MSEA) (formerly the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment); Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		13 CBOs across the three demonstration sites (Jebel Abdul Aziz, Abu Qubeis, and Al Fronloq)	
Private sector involvement		Via Nova, As project partner	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		October 15, 2004	
Effectiveness date / project start		February 8, 2005	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		February 8, 2012	
Actual date of project completion		December 31, 2012	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	.19	.19
	Co-financing	.03	.03
GEF Project Grant		3.29	3.28
Co-financing	IA own	.5	.48
	Government	2.93	2.96
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		
	Private sector		
NGOs/CSOs			
Total GEF funding		3.48	3.47
Total Co-financing		3.46	3.47
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		6.94	6.94
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		November 2014	
Author of TE		Nabegh Ghazal Asswad	
TER completion date		2/10/2016	
TER prepared by		Laura Nissley	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)		Molly Watts	

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF IEO Review
Project Outcomes	S	S	--	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes		ML	--	ML
M&E Design		NR	--	MU
M&E Implementation		S	--	MU
Quality of Implementation		HS	--	MS
Quality of Execution		HS	--	MS
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report		--	--	U

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Global Environmental Objective of the project is “the conservation of globally significant biodiversity within three project demonstration sites. This includes the conservation of important species, genetic and ecosystem diversity within these sites. In addition, through support to provincial and national-level structures, the project will contribute to the conservation of globally significant biodiversity throughout Syria. This will be achieved both through direct project actions as well as through an expected replication effect. The latter will be engendered through the demonstration and dissemination of a functioning model of protected area management, which is currently lacking in Syria” (PD pg. 95).

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The Development Objective of the project is to “ensure that Syria’s globally and nationally significant biodiversity is sustainably used by, and provides benefits to, its current generation while being conserved for the benefit of present and future generations worldwide” (PD pg. 77).

3.3 Were there any **changes** in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or other activities during implementation?

The TE notes that activities were revised based on the recommendations made in the Midterm Review in 2008, however the project’s outcomes and objectives were not changed (TE pg. v).

4. GEF IEO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

Relevance can receive either a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating. For Effectiveness and Cost efficiency, a six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess. Sustainability ratings are assessed on a four-point scale: Likely=no or negligible risk; Moderately Likely=low risk; Moderately Unlikely=substantial risks; Unlikely=high risk. In assessing a Sustainability rating please note if, and to what degree, sustainability of project outcomes is threatened by financial, sociopolitical, institutional/governance, or environmental factors.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 Relevance	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE provides a rating of “relevant” for this component of project outcomes, which this TER adjusts to **Satisfactory**. The project outcomes were focused on conservation and sustainable use of forest and dryland ecosystems, which was consistent with GEF-3 *Operational Program 1 for Biodiversity, Arid and Semi-Arid Ecosystems*. In particular, the project focused on the following outputs under *Operational Program 1*: threat removal, sectoral integration, sustainable use, and institutional strengthening. Although the project was funded under GEF-3, it was also designed to align with the emerging strategic programs under the next GEF replenishment phase. In particular, the project outcomes were consistent with *Strategic Priority 1: Catalyzing Sustainability for Protected Areas*, specifically developing the long-term capacity and sustainability of the national protected area system (PD pg. 84).

The project was also consistent with Syria’s national policies and laws regarding biodiversity. The 1994 Forestry Law gave the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR) the right to establish nature protected areas, restoration protected areas, and rangeland protected areas. In 2002, the Environmental Law No. 50 was enacted, which gave the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MLAE) the right to monitor these protected areas and provided an Environmental Fund to support the effective management of the protected areas. Additionally, the project is in line with Syria’s responsibilities as a signatory to a number of international conventions and agreements on biodiversity, including the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Heritage Convention, the Ramsar Convention, the protocol regarding Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (SPA/BD Protocol), and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (PD pgs. 63-65).

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE provides a rating of **Highly Satisfactory** for project effectiveness, which this TER revises to **Moderately Satisfactory**. The overall objective of the project was to demonstrate practical methods of protected area management that effectively conserve biodiversity. It should be noted here that the project documents do not clearly articulate the expected results under this objective. There is some evidence that protected area management improved at the demonstration sites, however assessment of overall project performance is limited by gaps in evidence in the TE and the project implementation reviews (PIRs). It is notable that a National Policy and Strategy on Protected Areas of Syria was drafted by the end of the project, and integrated management plans and ecological monitoring guidelines were developed and implemented at the demonstration sites.

A summary of the project’s achievements, by outcome, is provided below:

- **Outcome 1: Policies and institutional systems that allow for the wise selection and effective operation of protected areas to conserve globally significant biodiversity:**

Expected results under this outcome included: (1) strengthened institutional arrangements for protected area planning and management, (2) new policies and legislation developed to support protected areas, (3) increased capacity of institutional partners to effectively manage the protected area system, and (4) increased inter-sectoral coordination for managing the protected area system. By project end, the National Policy and Strategy on Protected Areas of Syria had been finalized and submitted to national partners for adoption at the ministerial level (TE pg. 38). The National Policy identified the institutional arrangements for protected area planning and management at the national level, including the respective roles of relevant agencies. Protected area management manuals were also developed and distributed (2011 PIR pgs. 7-8). Both the TE and the project implementation reviews claim that capacity for effectively managing the protected area system and inter-sectoral coordination had increased by project end, however these reports do not provide concrete evidence to substantiate these claims.

- **Outcome 2: Effective techniques for protected area management and biodiversity conservation have been demonstrated through the design and implementation of management plans at three sites:**

Expected results under this outcome included: (1) increased capacity of local cadres and managers in ecosystem-based management, (2) improved monitoring of biodiversity at three protected area sites, (3) integrated management plans are developed and implemented at each site, and (4) mechanisms for protected area financing are developed and promoted. By project end, integrated management plans were developed at all three sites (Jebel Abdul Aziz, Abu Qubeis, and Al Fronloq) (TE pg. 33). The project was also able work with the fourth protected area, Al Lajat Man & Biosphere Reserve, to develop an interim management plan. Additionally, staff at the protected area sites (including Al Lajat) were trained in ecosystem-based management, although the TE does not provide evidence of an increase in capacity (TE pg. 29). Ecological monitoring guidelines were developed and baseline surveys were conducted at the protected area sites (TE pg. 13; 2011 PIR pg. 12). By project end, funding for protected areas was still linked with the Forestry Department budget within the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR). However, a request had been made to create an independent budget under the proposed National Action Plan (TE pg. 33).

- **Outcome 3: Sustainable use of natural resources in and around protected areas has been demonstrated through the development and implementation of a program for alternative sustainable livelihoods and community resource management:**

Expected results under this outcome included: (1) integration of participatory management mechanisms within demonstration sites, and (2) alternative sources of income introduced by the project. By project end, the draft National Policy and Strategy on Protected Areas of Syria included provisions for the involvement of local communities in protected area management (2011 PIR pg. 14). Additionally, advisory committees representing local community members were established at each protected area site (2011 PIR pg. 16). At the Jebel Abdul Aziz site, four projects for sheep fattening were underway by project end, benefiting approximately 31% of the total families at the site (exceeding the target of 25%). At the Al Fronloq site, two projects for

marketing local products were underway, benefiting 35% of the total families (exceeding the target of 25%). At the Abu Qubeis site, two projects on medicinal plant growing and cattle husbandry were underway, benefitting 40% of the total families (exceeding the target of 25%) (TE pg. 25).

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE provides a rating of **Satisfactory** for project efficiency, which this TER revises the rating to **Moderately Satisfactory**. The project experienced moderate delays during the inception period, which lasted 10 months rather than the expected 3 months. The Midterm Review notes multiple reasons for the delays at project start-up, namely a weak project document, weak management capacity in the project management unit (PMU), complex financial arrangements, and unfamiliarity with the protected area concept in Syria (Midterm Review pg. 57). The Midterm Review notes that overall, progress toward achieving project outcomes was slow during the first few years of implementation, which was likely compounded by inefficiencies at start-up (Midterm Review pg. 98). Later in the project, political unrest in Syria contributed to a temporary slowdown of project activities, particularly the ecological surveys and monitoring, awareness raising, and livelihood support (TE pg. 38). However, the TE does not indicate that these delays affected the achievement of project outcomes. The project completion date was extended 8 months, from February 2012 to December 2012.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately Likely
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The TE provides a rating of **Moderately Likely** for overall project sustainability and this TER concurs.

Financial Resources

This TER assesses the sustainability of financial resources to be **Moderately Likely**. The TE notes that there are financial barriers to expanding the protected area system, as well as addressing the current financial needs of the existing protected areas. Funding for protected areas is linked to the Forestry Department budget within the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR), as the protected area system grew out of the forest reserves. As the TE notes however, the new system requires funding beyond the protection of forests (TE pg. 29). By project end, a request had been made to create an independent budget under the proposed National Action Plan (TE pg. 33). Although an improved mechanism for protected area financing had not been achieved by the end of implementation, the project did contribute to establishing income generating activities at the project sites, which should be

sustainable after project end. Additionally, two micro-credit and micro-enterprise schemes were managed by community members at the Al Fronloq site (TE pg. 34).

Sociopolitical

This TER assesses sociopolitical sustainability to be **Moderately Likely**. The TE notes that involving community members in the management planning process has built significant social capital and commitment to the long term objectives of the project (TE pg. 29). Additionally, the Syrian Government has demonstrated consistent commitment and ownership over the project. The TE does note however, that the political unrest in Syria and possible re-centralization of powers could jeopardize some of the outcomes of the project, particularly the management plans which were designed for a more localized planning system (TE pg. 30).

Institutional Frameworks and Governance

This TER assesses the sustainability of institutional frameworks and governance to be **Likely**. The TE notes that the institutional capacity of the Ministry of State for Environment Affairs (MSEA) (formerly the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR) for developing the protected area system has increased. Importantly, the project contributed to helping MSEA and MAAR define their roles and responsibilities within the system. MSEA is now responsible for developing the overall strategy and regulating the system, whereas MAAR is responsible for directly managing the protected area sites (TE pg. 28). Additionally, the development of a National Policy and Strategy on Protected Areas should provide the necessary institutional framework which was lacking prior to the project. At the site level, management plans have been developed which strengthen natural resource governance (TE pg. 27).

Environmental

The TE does not provide sufficient information to assess environmental sustainability.

5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

Actual total co-financing (\$3.47 million) was as expected at project start (\$3.46 million). The TE notes that government co-financing, which accounted for 85% of the total co-financing, significantly contributed to the achievement of the project's objectives, although the report does not elaborate on this. Government co-financing was largely used to pay for staff salaries, the management of the Program Implementation Unit, and the daily operations of the project offices at the demonstration sites (TE pg. 14).

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project’s outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The project experienced moderate delays at project start-up due to a weak project document, weak management capacity in the project management unit (PMU), complex financial arrangements, and unfamiliarity with the protected area concept in Syria (Midterm Review pg. 57). It is likely that these delays affected progress toward achieving project outcomes in the first few years of the project. The project also experienced delays during implementation due to political unrest in the country. The TE does not indicate whether or not these delays affected the achievement of project outcomes. The TE does however, note that continued unrest and re-centralization could affect the sustainability of project outcomes, as the project was designed and implemented around localized planning. The project completion date was extended 8 months, from February 2012 to December 2012.

5.3 Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links:

The TE does not directly address country ownership. The Ministry of State for Environment Affairs (MSEA) (formerly the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment) was the formal executing agency for the project, however the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR) was a key implementing partner, managing the day to day activities of the project (Midterm Review pg. 63). The Syrian government also provided significant co-financing for the project (85% of the total) through the MSEA and the MAAR. Additionally, the TE notes that the project closely collaborated with community-based organizations at the three demonstration sites which led to a degree of co-ownership over project outcomes, particularly relating to the development of management plans and the alternative livelihood initiatives (TE pg. 13-14).

6. Assessment of project’s Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The TE does not provide a rating for M&E design at entry. The results framework outlined in the Project Document is logically sound, but it does not include the expected outputs of the project. The indicators provided at the outcome and objective levels are not SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely). For example, an indicator for Outcome 1 reads, *By end of Year 4, relevant HQ units*

possess a critical mass of trained staff able to effectively manage the overall Protected Area system, including oversight of individual Protected areas (PD pg. 104). The terms “critical mass” and “effectively manage” are vague, and it is unclear how they would be measured. At the objective level, the indicators are equally problematic. For example, one indicator reads, *50% increase in ecosystem integrity by end of the project and 50% decrease in level of threats*. Again, it is unclear what is meant by “ecosystem integrity” or “threats.” Baseline values are also not provided for any of the indicators. Although targets are set for objective level indicators, they appear to be artificially set (Midterm Review pg. 92). Overall, the proposed results framework was inappropriate for the given project and ineffective as a monitoring and evaluation tool.

The Project Document does include a general M&E plan, outlining the relevant M&E activities, including establishing a baseline, ongoing monitoring of process and impact indicators, annual reviews and reports, site monitoring visits, and an independent midterm and final evaluation. The M&E plan also documents the general purpose of each activity, in addition to the responsible party and associated budget. In total, the Project Document provides \$152,000 for M&E, or approximately 4.6% of the GEF budget (TE pgs. 59-60).

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory
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The TE provides a rating of **Satisfactory** for M&E implementation, which this TER downgrades to **Moderately Unsatisfactory**. The Midterm Review notes that the results framework was revised six times during the inception phase of the project (pg. 72). However, the revised indicators were not necessarily more appropriate for tracking progress toward achieving results. For example, *Level of capacity of MAAR and MLAE to effectively manage the overall Protected Area system*, is not more specific or measurable than its predecessor, *By end of Year 4, relevant HQ units possess a critical mass of trained staff able to effectively manage the overall Protected Area system, including oversight of individual Protected areas*. The Midterm Review also notes that weak indicators contributed to ineffectual project monitoring in the first three years of project implementation (pg. 70). A review of the subsequent project implementation reviews (PIRs) indicates that project monitoring was still weak after the Midterm Review. Although the project team diligently described project activities in the PIRs, progress toward achieving results was not well documented. The project did attempt to track progress in some areas using tools such as the Threat Reduction Analysis Tool and Management Evaluation Tracking Tool, however the project team appears to have struggled with their application and it doesn’t appear that the results were used for adaptive management (Midterm Review pg. 97).

7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation includes the quality of project design, as well as the quality of supervision and assistance provided by implementing agency(s) to execution agencies throughout project implementation. Quality of Execution covers the effectiveness of the executing agency(s) in performing its roles and responsibilities. In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely

within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

7.1 Quality of Project Implementation	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE provides a rating of **Highly Satisfactory** for quality of project implementation, which this TER revises to **Moderately Satisfactory**. The Midterm Review and the TE both note that the Project Document contained a number of shortcomings that limited its effectiveness as a guiding document. Ultimately, the majority of the key provisions in the Project Document had to be reformulated, including the results framework, implementation approach, financial arrangements, and terms of reference for hiring. Moreover, the Midterm Review reported that the project team did not have access to the revised Project Document, so it is unlikely that it was used as a guiding document in the early years of the project (pg. 54). The TE does note however, that UNDP closely supervised the project throughout implementation. The UNDP Country Office provided training to project staff, monitored project performance through regular site visits, oversaw the project budget, actively participated in the project steering committee, and contributed to the annual reports (TE pgs. 11-12).

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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The TE provides a rating of **Highly Satisfactory** for quality of project execution, which this TER revises to **Moderately Satisfactory**. The official executing agency for the project was the Ministry of State for Environment Affairs (MSEA) (formerly the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment). However, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between MSEA and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR) in 2005, which provided a framework for coordination between the two ministries regarding the implementation of project activities (Midterm Review pg. 104). The TE reported that the two ministries worked well together to execute project activities, which in itself was a milestone given previous competition over protected area management responsibilities (pg. 11). Both MSEA and MAAR representatives staffed the Project Management Unit (PMU), and MAAR was responsible for directly managing project activities at the demonstration sites. Project management at both the central and demonstration site levels was weak in the beginning of implementation, however the TE found that this improved over the life of the project (TE pg. 12). The Project Steering Committee, renamed the Project Executive Committee, was also operational and effective (TE pg. 10). It should be noted again however, that results-based monitoring was consistently weak throughout the project.

8. Assessment of Project Impacts

Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

The TE does not cite any environmental changes that occurred by the end of the project. However, it does note the number of the declared national Protected Areas had increased from 27 in 2008 to 38 PAs in 2013 (after the project end) (TE pg. 32). The TE does not indicate how the project contributed to this change, as expanding the protected area system was not an explicit component of the project.

8.2 Socioeconomic change. Describe any changes in human well-being (income, education, health, community relationships, etc.) that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

By project end, four projects for sheep fattening were underway at the Jebel Abdul Aziz site, benefiting approximately 31% of the total families at the site. At the Al Fronloq site, two projects for marketing local products were underway, benefiting 35% of the total families. At the Abu Qubeis site, two projects on medicinal plant growing and cattle husbandry were underway, benefitting 40% of the total families (TE pg. 25). The TE does not quantify the benefit of these alternative livelihood activities.

8.3 Capacity and governance changes. Describe notable changes in capacities and governance that can lead to large-scale action (both mass and legislative) bringing about positive environmental change. "Capacities" include awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and environmental monitoring systems, among others. "Governance" refers to decision-making processes, structures and systems, including access to and use of information, and thus would include laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc. Indicate how project activities contributed to/ hindered these changes, as well as how contextual factors have influenced these changes.

a) Capacities

The TE also notes that staff at the protected area sites were trained in ecosystem-based management, although the TE does not provide evidence of an increase in capacity (TE pg. 29).

b) Governance

The TE notes that by project end, a National Policy and Strategy on Protected Areas of Syria had been finalized and submitted to national partners for adoption at the ministerial level (TE pg. 38). Additionally, there was an increase in community participation in protected area management at the demonstration sites through advisory committees (2011 PIR pg. 16).

8.4 Unintended impacts. Describe any impacts not targeted by the project, whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects. Indicate the factors that contributed to these unintended impacts occurring.

The TE does not cite any unintended impacts that occurred by the end of the project.

8.5 Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale. Identify any initiatives (e.g. technologies, approaches, financing instruments, implementing bodies, legal frameworks, information systems) that have been mainstreamed, replicated and/or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project end. Include the extent to which this broader adoption has taken place, e.g. if plans and resources have been established but no actual adoption has taken place, or if market change and large-scale environmental benefits have begun to occur. Indicate how project activities and other contextual factors contributed to these taking place. If broader adoption has not taken place as expected, indicate which factors (both project-related and contextual) have hindered this from happening.

The TE notes that the project was able to replicate key initiatives at a fourth protected area, Al Lajat Man & Biosphere Reserve, such as developing an interim management plan and training staff in ecosystem-based management (TE pg. 29; 38).

9. Lessons and recommendations

9.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects.

The TE includes a “lessons learned” section, however it is really a recommendations section (see below).

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE provides the following recommendations (pgs. 45-46)¹:

- It is important that the major partner (UNDP/GEF) through the Country Office will keep offering support where needed to the national stakeholders in various ways-- providing financial and technical support to maintain the positive outcomes achieved through the life of the Project, and keep a fair level of engagement in the activities of the PAs [protected areas] where possible.

¹ Significantly copy-edited for clarity.

- Keep the Project Management Unit, and this unit will continue to act as a training center and generating new work where possible within the network of national PAs.
- Implement and review the management plan for each site to strengthen its position within the national network of PAs.
- Management of PAs should have some independence from the central governmental institutions and locals should be a part of the dialogue for the full benefit of all relevant stakeholders. However, this autonomy must not lead to a weak relationship with other governmental bodies, but it will empower the PMU [project management unit] to deliver better services for the PAs as a whole.
- PMU and PAs staff, should be kept in their roles for at least a period of 10 years before relocating to other departments. Alternatively, a project staff can be given leave from their position if they successfully train and contribute to raising the capabilities of newly appointed staff at the sites or at other locations within the national network of PAs.
- All equipment and materials that were provided to the project should remain at their designated sites. This will include transportation vehicles, computing peripherals, offices and buildings as continued support provided in kind by the government.
- As with the recommendation set for the PMU, any employee of the ministries that has been subject to intensive training and capacity development within the Project must not be given permission to leave to other posts unless a replacement is provided to cover the gap that might result from such move. All equipment and resources within the PAs can be fairly shared where needed and feasible to reduce the costs of running the Project.
- Promote and emphasize the participatory approach through a greater involvement of the community in all decisions relating to the natural reserves. This will enable the locals to voice their needs to the higher levels of the management boards.
- Strengthen the capabilities of locals within the Protected Area Management Board for each PA to participate actively and include representation from each community within the PA.
- Strengthen and implement a strategic approach to the PA system in Syria based on representation and ecological surveys.
- Utilize fully all the financial mechanisms available at UNDP to facilitate the efficient implementation of the project activities.

- Provide for true participation (through meaningful membership of the PA Management Board) by the communities that live and/or depend on the PAs for their livelihoods and existence – a true sharing of the decision-making (and responsibilities) for the PA management. Start seeing the local communities not only as beneficiaries, but as joint-owners of the PAs.
- Provide training to Project staff on issues related to developing management procedures
- Strengthen the strategy for communities’ engagement and participation in management activities as to be approached as partners.
- Promote achieving a self-revenue and income for the PAs which ensures their financial independence and consequently the sustainability of their work.

10. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

A six point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria	GEF IEO comments	Rating
To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	The assessment of project outcomes and impacts is very weak. Very little detail is included. The writing itself is very difficult to understand (poor sentence structure, etc.). Project relevance and efficiency are not addressed at all.	HU
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	There is a notable lack of evidence presented in the report. This is in part due to a poor M&E system and lack of results based monitoring, however the TE does not attempt to provide evidence for its claims.	HU
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The sustainability section of the report is lengthy and disorganized. The information is there, however it is buried. Environmental sustainability is not adequately addressed.	MS
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The report does not include actual lessons learned section, and the recommendations it does provide are not comprehensive and largely redundant.	U
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The report includes actual project costs and actual co-financing used. The project summary table (pg. iv) and co-financing table (pg. 37) are disaggregated differently which is confusing. Additionally, the report makes the claim that the in-kind government contribution exceeded the allocated budget by 42%, however this is not supported by any evidence in the project documents (or the report for that matter).	MU
Assess the quality of the report’s evaluation of project M&E systems:	The report does not assess the M&E design, and its assessment of M&E implementation is not comprehensive. This TER also disagrees with the report’s rating.	MU
Overall TE Rating		U

11. Note any additional sources of information used in the preparation of the terminal evaluation report (excluding PIRs, TEs, and PADs).

Midterm Review (2008).²

² The Midterm Review was included as an annex in the 2008 PIR.